

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6270

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, EGEN, EIND, SF, US, BEXP

SUBJECT: US BUSINESS MANIFESTO: ADDITIONAL PLEDGES

REF: STATE 134880 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: THE COINCIDENCE OF REVEREND LEON SULLIVAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF 21 ADDITIONAL SIGNATURES TO THE SIX-POINT PROGRAMME AIMED AT IMPROVING CONDITIONS FOR NON-WHITE EMPLOYEES IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE PRESENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA IN THE UNITED STATES TO PROMOTE INVESTMENT IN THE REPUBLIC IS SEEN BY SOME OBSERVERS AS NOT ACCIDENTAL. END SUMMARY.

2. THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY THE STAR SAID: QUOTE - ANOTHER 21 MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY PLEDGED TO DISMANTLE THE COLOUR BAR IN THEIR SOUTH AFRICAN SUBSIDIARIES. AMERICAN BANKERS AND INVESTORS WHO MET MR PIK BOTHA, THE SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN MINISTER, IN NEW YORK LAST NIGHT, WERE ALSO PRE-

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PARED TO POSE POINTED QUESTIONS ON HOW SOUTH AFRICA INTENDS TO ADJUST ITS LABOUR POLICIES.

MR BOTHA GAVE THEM ASSURANCES AT A FIRST MEETING THAT NECESSARY CHANGE WAS ON THE WAY.

OUTSIDE, DEMONSTRATORS WERE PROTESTING AGAINST SA'S DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES -- AND PLANNED TO REPEAT THE DEMONSTRATIONS AT A SECOND INVESTMENT CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK TODAY.

MR BOTHA IS AT THE HEAD OF A POWERFUL SOUTH AFRICAN BUSINESS MISSION TO THE US TRYING TO PERSUADE INVESTORS TO MAINTAIN THE FLOW OF INVESTMENTS INTO SOUTH AFRICA.

AT HOME TODAY, THE CHAMBER OF MINES ALSO JOINED ORGANIZED DOMESTIC COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN APPEALS FOR CHANGE.

MR R.A. PLUMBRIDGE, PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER, URGED THE LIFTING OF RESTRICTIONS AND CURBS "TO ENABLE PEOPLE OF ALL RACES TO PARTICIPATE EQUALLY IN THE MARKET PLACE."

THE 21 AMERICAN COMPANIES WHICH PLEDGED ACTION TODAY ADDED THEIR NAMES TO THE FIRST 12 US MULTINATIONALS WHO SIGNED A SIX-POINT PROGRAMME TO BRING ABOUT EQUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES FOR ALL RACES IN THEIR SOUTH AFRICAN OPERATIONS.

AMBASSADOR:

THE LATEST ENDORSEMENT WAS DELIVERED IN WASHINGTON TO MR DONALD SOLE, THE SA AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES, BY MR. LEON SULLIVAN, A BOARD DIRECTOR OF THE VAST GENERAL MOTORS EMPIRE. HE IS ALSO A PASTOR OF THE ZION BAPTIST CHURCH.

MR SULLIVAN LATER TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE THAT SUPPORT FOR THE PROGRAMME WAS NOW EXPECTED SOON FROM BRITISH AND SWEDISH COMPANIES WITH SA SUBSIDIARIES.

IF THE INITIATIVE WAS FOLLOWED THROUGH, HE SAID, PRESSURE FOR CHANGE WOULD TURN FROM A RIPPLE INTO A TIDE.

"IF IT WORKS, WE'LL KNOW IN ABOUT A YEAR...IF IT DOESN'T WORK, THE ALTERNATIVE WILL BE VIOLENCE."UNQUOTE.

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3. THE RAND DAILY MAIL SAID SULLIVAN WOULD BE MEETING WITH DANISH AS WELL AS BRITISH AND SWEDISH INDUSTRIALISTS.

4. COMMENT: BRITISH LABOR ATTACHE VOSE, TRADE UNION LEADERS AND MEMBERS OF THE PRESS CORPS HAVE INDICATED IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS THAT THEY SEE SULLIVAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF 21 ADDITIONAL PLEDGES DURING THE VISIT OF PIK BOTHA IN THE UNITED STATES AS SUPPORTIVE OF THE CURRENT SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IS OCCURRING IN SOUTH AFRICAN LABOR PRACTICES. THEY ARE LESS CERTAIN WHETHER SUCH CHANGE WILL ACTUALLY OCCUR, HOWEVER, IN PRESENT ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES.

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